

Community resources

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courage is contagious

Viewing cable 09BAGHDAD495, NAJAF BUSINESSMEN ON TRADE WITH IRAN: "NO OTHER

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09BAGHDAD495**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BAGHDAD495	2009-02-26 07:58	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Baghdad

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/17/112290/state-department-cables-reveal.html>

VZCZCXRO3024
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #0495 0570758
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 260758Z FEB 09 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1877
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000495

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: NAJAF BUSINESSMEN ON TRADE WITH IRAN: "NO OTHER CHOICE"

REF: BAGHDAD 196

Classified By: Senior Advisor Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Najaf businessmen expressed frustration with their limited choices of foreign business partners in a February 23 meeting with Senior Advisor Gordon Gray. Too often, they said, they are finding doors closed to them in Jordan, the Arab Gulf states, and Europe. End summary.

¶2. (C) Senior Advisor Gray, Provincial Reconstruction Team officers, and emboffs met with Najaf Chamber of Commerce Chairman Zuhair Sharba and approximately 15 businessmen who are members of the Chamber on February 23 in Najaf. When asked about Iranian influence on Najaf,s trade environment, they responded: "We have no other choice." They suspect Iraqis outside Najaf judge them sympathetic to Iran in their business dealings, but were adamant this is not the case.

¶3. (C) The Najaf businessmen told us they feel marginalized by the Arab business community. One stated he owns several businesses in Jordan but the Government of Jordan refuses to issue him a visa to visit his own companies. He is offended by being asked sectarian questions on his Jordanian visa application. Others expressed disappointment with the Arab Gulf states, saying they are often ignored and not taken seriously as trading partners. Many of the businessmen contrasted the ease of travel to Iran with the difficulties in obtaining visas from Arab Gulf countries. The businessmen said they welcome competition and look forward to business dealings with Europe and the United States, but cited difficulties in obtaining visas there as well.

¶4. (C) Comment: Najaf businessmen provided much the same feedback on the poor quality of Iranian products as Iran Watcher heard in Erbil (reftel). But unlike businessmen in Kurdistan who are close to Turkey, those in Najaf feel trapped and without options. Increased trade and investment links, with Arab Gulf states, the broader region, or industrialized economies abroad would help counter Iranian influence in Najaf,s business community. End comment.
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